



## **2021 American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funds: Executive Summary**

### **Prepared by the Office of Research, and Evaluation**

#### **June 9, 2021**

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act which provides \$546 million to K-12 education in Nebraska, was signed into law by President Biden in March 2021. As part of its commitment to stakeholder engagement, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) recently administered a public input survey to drive the statewide and local priorities for using the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funds. The survey was administered from May 26, 2021, through June 7, 2021, using the Qualtrics survey service platform, and a total of 436 survey responses were received.

Some of the key survey findings are listed as follows:

- The largest group of the respondents (41.97%) were school or district administrators (n = 183). The next largest group was represented by parents/caregivers who made up 29.36% of the respondents (n = 128).
- Respondents were from most of the geographic regions across Nebraska, with the largest numbers from Douglas (22.48%, n = 98), Lancaster (11.70%, n = 51), and Sarpy (7.57%, n = 33) counties. Douglas and Lancaster counties are the two most populous counties in Nebraska, housing Omaha Public Schools and Lincoln Public Schools, respectively.
- Respondents identified the following three (3) greatest needs facing students during the COVID-19 pandemic:
  1. Social emotional supports for all students (56.19%, n = 245).
  2. Mental health supports for students (46.79%, n = 204).
  3. Unfinished teaching and learning resulting from closures (41.51%, n = 181).
- In terms of ranking of key components from the Nebraska's Framework for Renewal, and Acceleration, respondents identified the following as being of greatest importance and of the least importance:
  - Greatest importance: Ensuring equitable instruction (i.e., assessing and attending to the needs of historically marginalized student groups) (29.81%, n = 130).
  - Least importance: Planning for acceleration (37.39%, n = 163).
- Respondents identified the following three (3) most important strategies local school districts could implement as part of their investments:
  1. Reduced class sizes (42.43%, n = 185).
  2. Mental health training and support (39.91%, n = 174).

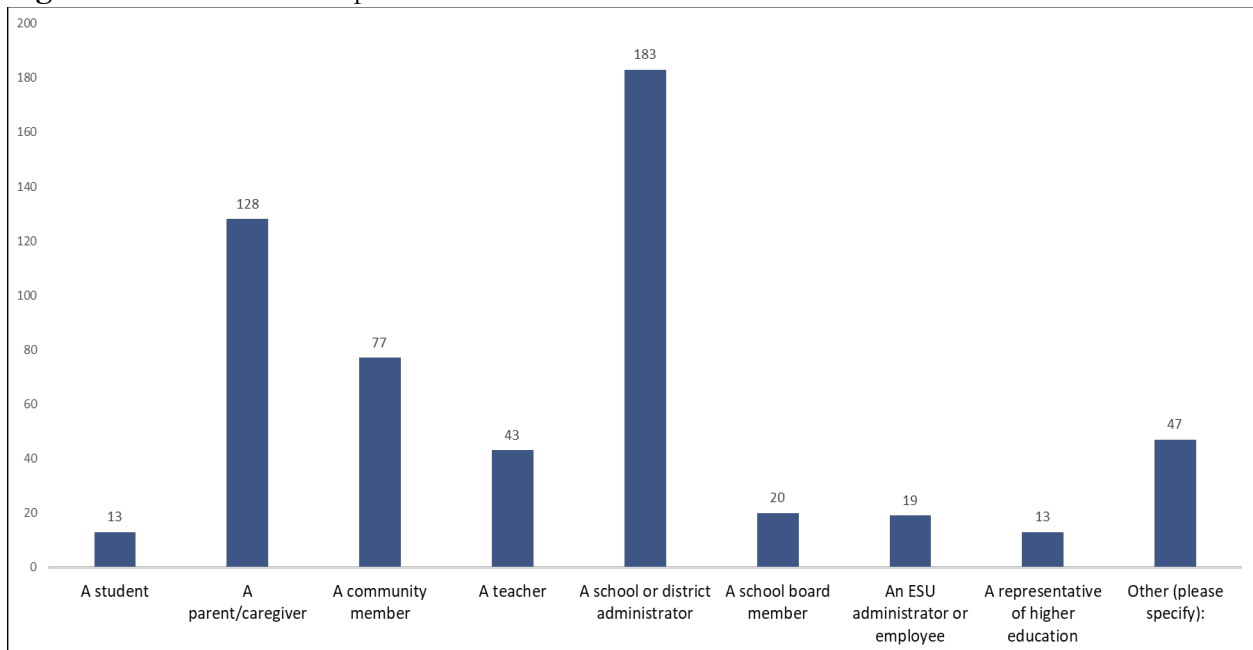
3. Professional learning to support the implementation of high-quality instructional materials (33.26%, n = 145).
- Respondents identified the following top three (3) statewide supports that NDE could/should provide through their investments:
    1. Mental health training and support (39.22%, n = 171).
    2. Reduce class sizes (33.48%, n = 146).
    3. Short-term mental health practitioners, psychologists, social workers (33.26%, n = 145).
  - Respondents identified the following top three (3) ways in which NDE can better recruit, support, and retain teachers and leaders during this time:
    1. Provide scholarship for continued education, additional certifications, proper endorsements (48.62%, n = 212).
    2. Improve access to social, emotional, and mental health resources for educators (37.61%, n = 164).
    3. Support alternate routes to certification (36.47%, n = 159).
  - Approximately 95% of the respondents (n = 412) provided open-ended comments to the question on investments they would make if money wasn't a barrier. The most occurring terms include mental health, special education, class size, and professional development.
  - Approximately 87% of the respondents (n = 379) provided open-ended comments to the question on what state and local investments should be made to prioritize students who have been historically marginalized. The most occurring terms include special education, internet access, professional development, mental health, student disability, and support student.
  - Approximately 35% of the respondents (n = 153) provided additional open-ended comments in response to the question on if they would like to add any more comments or questions. The most occurring terms include mental health, language interpreter, teacher shortage, child disability, and sign language

## Appendix

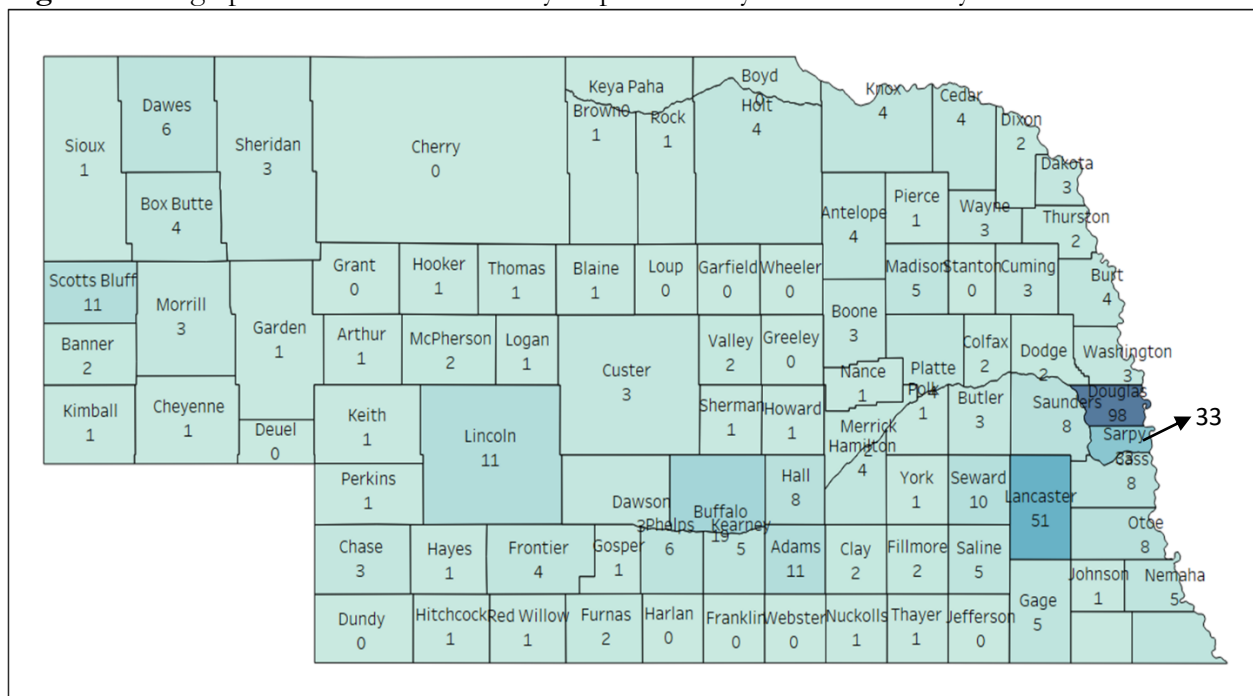
Preview of survey link:

[https://nde.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV\\_ehxqEVbbb7YNpNI?Q\\_CHL=preview&Q\\_SurveyVersionID=current](https://nde.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_ehxqEVbbb7YNpNI?Q_CHL=preview&Q_SurveyVersionID=current)

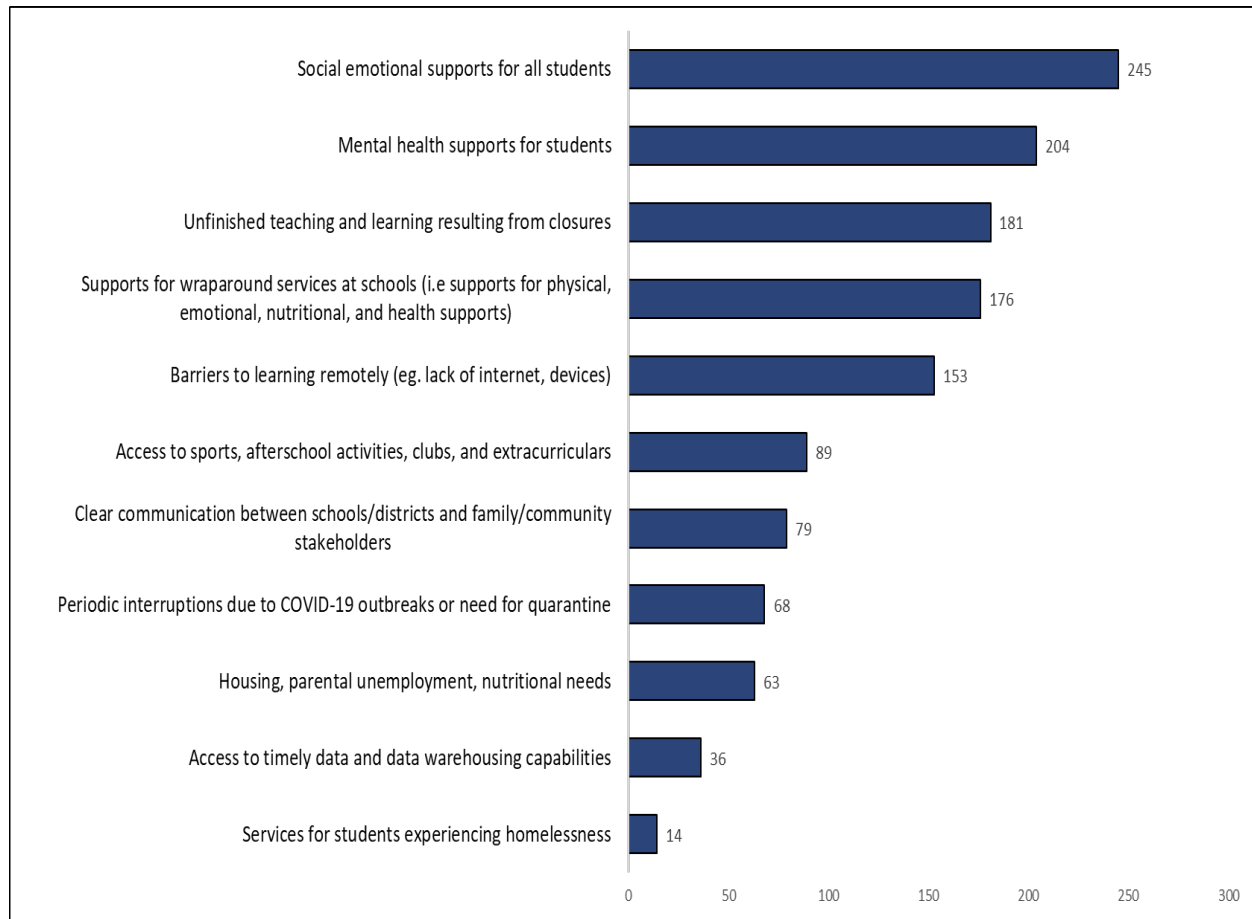
**Figure 1.** Breakdown of respondent roles in relation to education.



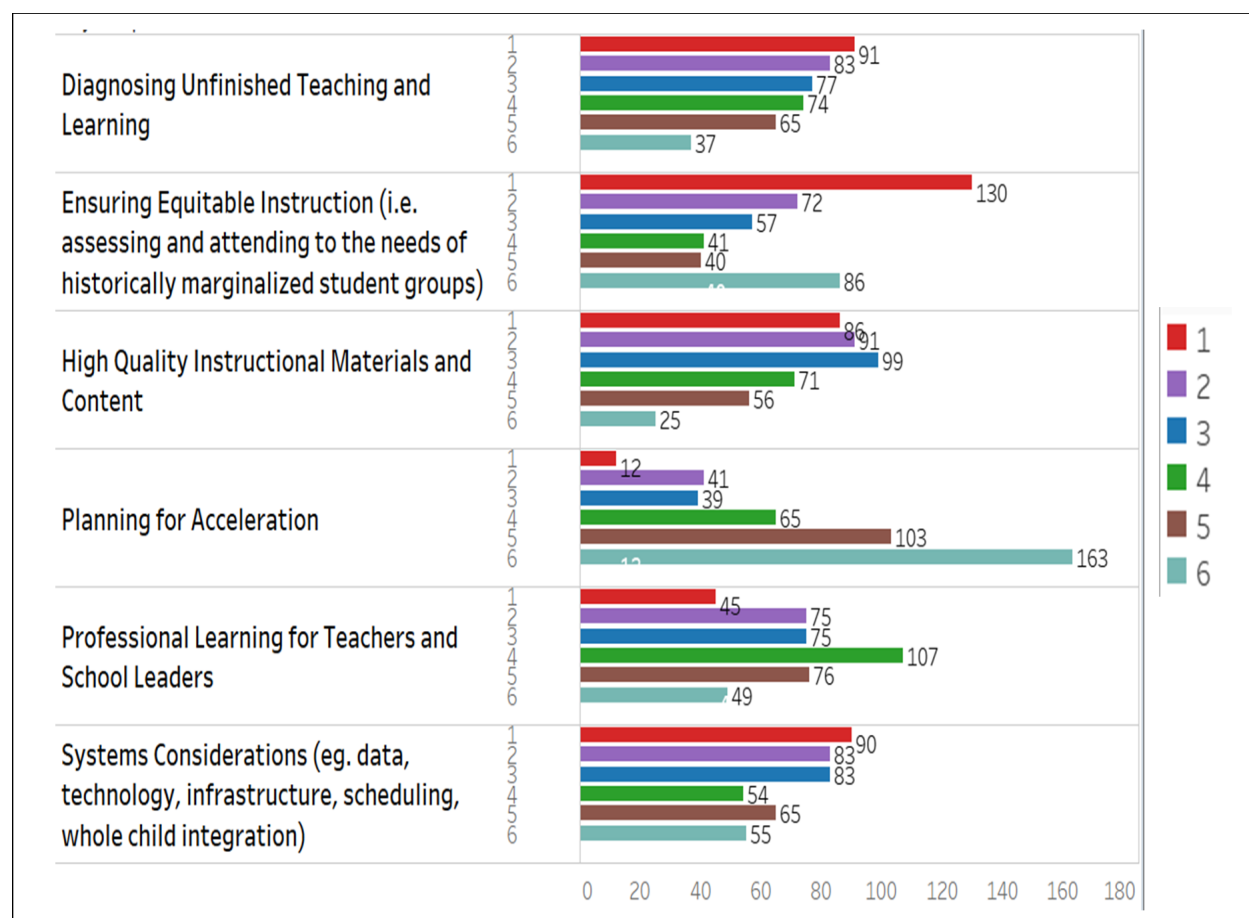
**Figure 2.** Geographic distribution of survey respondents by Nebraska county.



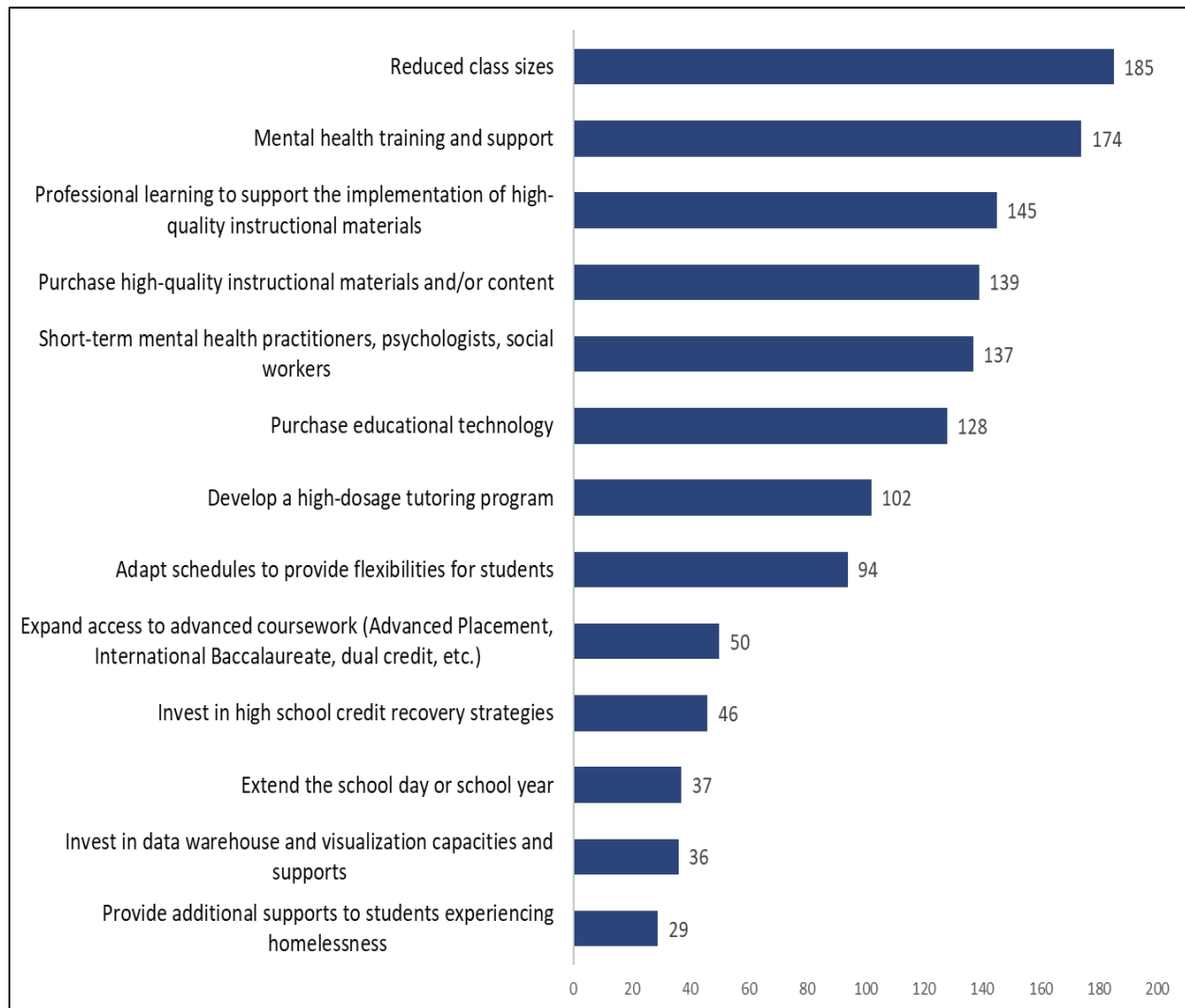
**Figure 3.** Distribution of greatest needs facing students during COVID-19 pandemic.



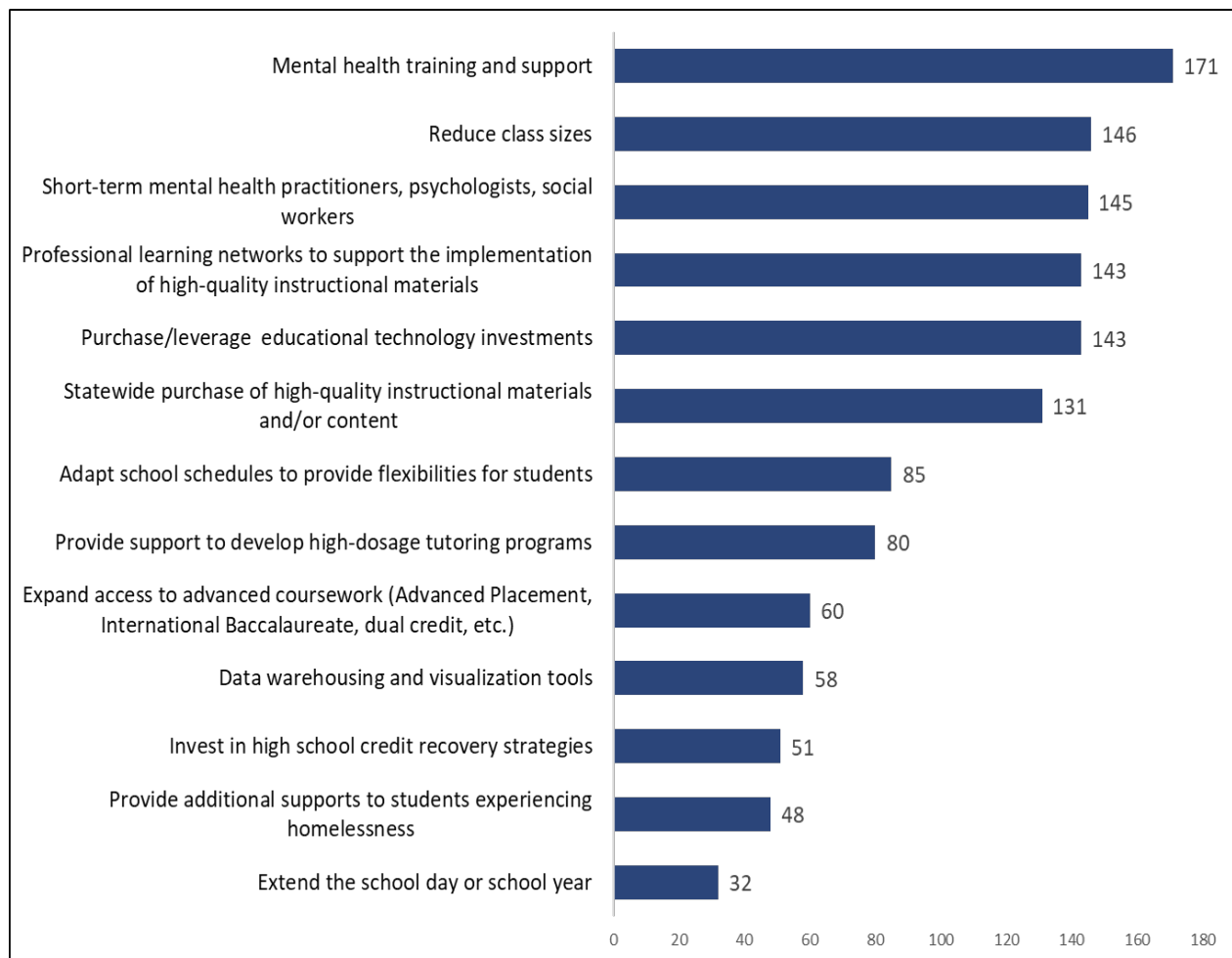
**Figure 4.** Ranking of Key Components from the Nebraska’s Framework for Renewal and Acceleration with, with "1" being “of greatest importance" and “6" being “of least importance."



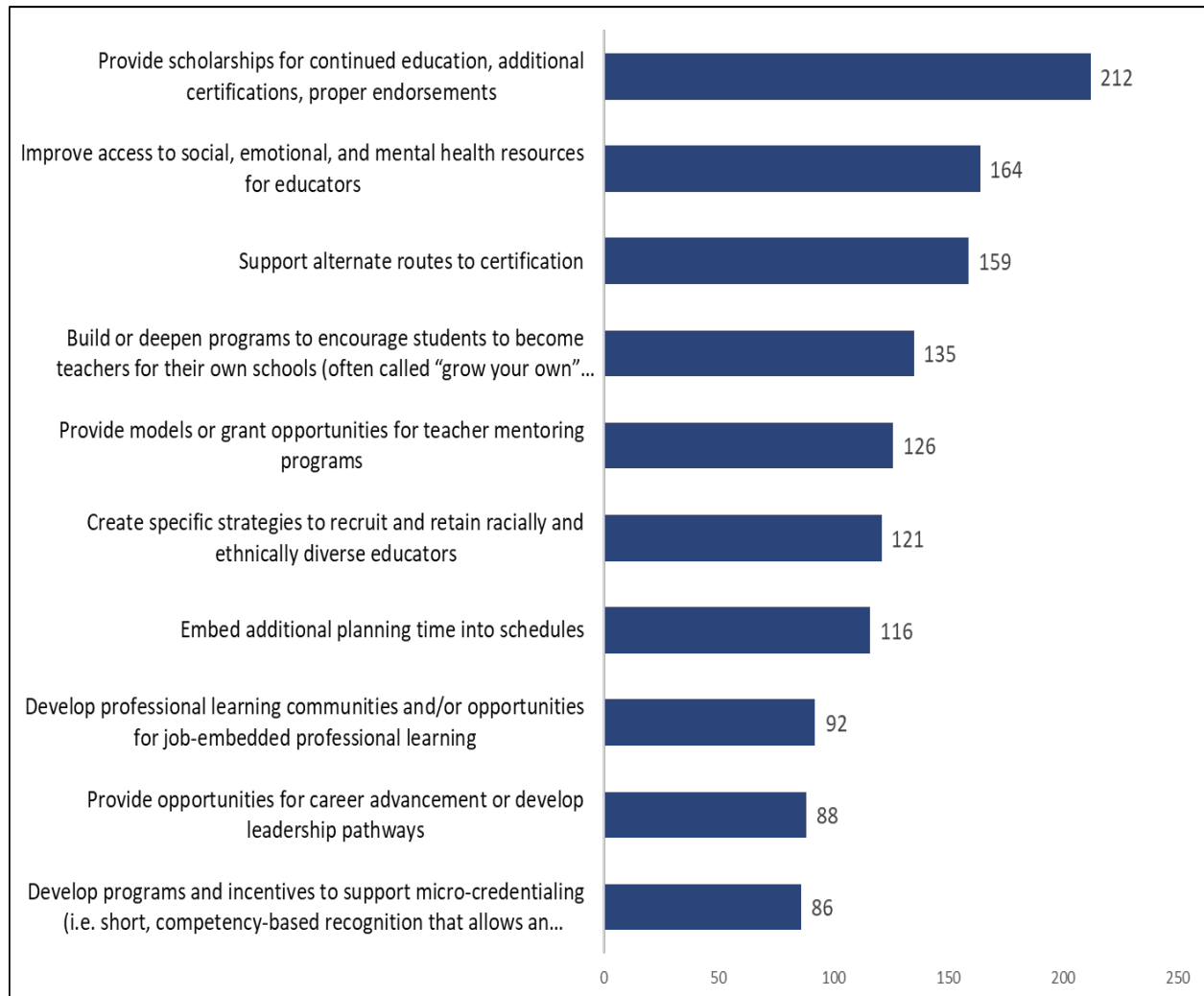
**Figure 5.** Distribution of most important strategies local school districts could implement.



**Figure 6.** Distribution of statewide supports that NDE could/should provide.



**Figure 7.** Ways in which NDE can better recruit, support, and retain teachers and leaders during this time.









**Figure 10.** Word cloud of survey comments provided by respondents in response to question on if they would like to add any more comments or questions.

